

## Message Text

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67

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

DRC-01 /144 W

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R 152225Z NOV 73

FM AMCONSUL SYDNEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4986

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL PERTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SYDNEY 2621

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJ: NEW SOUTH WALES GENERAL ELECTION

REF: SYDNEY 2576

SUMMARY: WITH TWO DAYS LEFT TO GO BEFORE THE BALLOTING, THE NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTION CAMPAIGN MAY PROVE TO BE ONE OF THE DULLEST IN MANY YEARS. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED ON ALL SIDES THE GOVERNMENT WILL WIN AND PERHAPS GAIN A FEW SEATS. THE TWO ISSUES WHICH MIGHT HAVE LENT SOME ZEST, NAMELY THE PREMIERS' ANTI-STRIKE EMERGENCY LEGISLATION AND THE BUILDERS LABORERS STRIKE, HAVE BOTH RECEDED AND THE STRIKE HAS ENDED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING.

1. THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD CAPTURED THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTION CAMPAIGN WITH A FEATURE ARTICLE ENTITLED "GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS". ARGUING THAT A DULL CAMPAIGN NORMALLY PRECEDES A GOVERNMENT VICTORY, THE HERALD PREDICTED A VICTORY FOR THE ASKIN GOVERNMENT.

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THE LIBERAL AND COUNTRY PARTY CAMPAIGN HAS RELIED MOSTLY

ON A FEW RADIO AND TELEVISION PERFORMANCES WHILE OPPOSITION LABOR PARTY LEADER HILL HAS TRIED HARD BUT HAS ENCOUNTERED MONUMENTAL APATHY JUDGING FROM THE TURNOUT AT HIS APPEARANCES. IT IS GENERALLY PREDICTED THE GOVERNMENT WILL WIN, EMERGING WITH A MAJORITY OF SIX TO TEN SEATS. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO BENEFIT FROM SECOND PREFERENCE VOTES FROM DLP CANDIDATES, WHILE IN CONTRAST TO 1972 FEDERAL ELECTION, LABOR PARTY WILL BENEFIT ONLY marginally FROM AUSTRALIA PARTY SECOND PREFERENCE SEATS IN A FEW ELECTORATES.

2. IN THE PAST WEEK EVEN INTEREST IN PREMIER ASKIN'S PROMISED ANTI-STRIKE EMERGENCY LEGISLATION HAS FLAGGED DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES LABOR PARTY TO TARGET PUBLIC ATTENTION ON IT.

3. THE BUILDERS LABORERS STRIKES WHICH HAD EARLIER STOPPED WORK ON MANY CONSTRUCTION SITES HAS BEEN AT LEAST PROVISIONALLY SETTLED WITH THE WORKERS GOING BACK TO WORK ON ALL SITES EXCEPT THOSE CLOSED BY "GREEN BANS" PLACED ON PROJECTS IN WHICH THERE IS SOME ECOLOGICAL ISSUE INVOLVED. THE EMPLOYEERS HAVE TERMINATED THE "LOCK OUT" AND THE LABOR COUNCIL IS SPONSORING A SERIES OF MEETINGS DESIGNED TO WORK OUT A COMMON UNION POLICY WITH REGARD TO "GREEN BANS". IF THE CONSERVATIVE LABOR COUNCIL HAS ITS WAY, THIS POLICY WILL BE ONE WHICH COMPROMISES WITH THE CONSERVATIONISTS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME GAINING SOME CONTROL OVER THE COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP OF THE BUILDERS LABORERS WHO HAVE BEEN EXPLOITING THIS ISSUE IN RECENT MONTHS. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE IMMEDIATE STRIKE AND LOCK OUT WILL TEND TO COOL THE ISSUE THROUGH THE ELECTION ALTHOUGH IT, ALONG WITH THE OTHER STRIKES INCONVENIENCING THE PUBLIC IN RECENT MONTHS, WILL LEAVE A BAD TASTE IN THE MOUTH OF THE VOTER ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17.

4. TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, THE WEAKNESS OF THE STATE LABOR PARTY IN THIS ELECTION CAN BE LAID AT THE DOOR OF THE FEDERAL LABOR GOVERNMENT. THE UNHELPFUL ATTITUDE OF FEDERAL MINISTERS SUCH AS CAMERON, UREN AND CASS, WHO HAVE PUBLICLY SUPPORTED THE BUILDERS LABORERS, THE

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WHITLAM-HAWKE TIFF, THE SEEMINGLY ERRATIC PERFORMANCE OF MINERALS MINISTER CONNOR, ILLUSTRATE HOW THE ATTENTION OF THE VOTER HAS BEEN DRAWN TO THE FEDERAL SCENE AND REFLECTED BACK UNFAVORABLY ON THE STATE LABOR PARTY IN THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN. HANNAH

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